

ATTACHMENT 2
CALIFORNIA DESERT DISTRICT, BLM
August, 1999

Documentation Form (PART I & II) for Rangeland Health Determination:
Achievement of Rangeland Health Standards,
Contributing Factors and Appropriate Action Priorities

PART I- Review

Indicate the date(s) or period the information covered: Field Assessment conducted during the 1999 grazing season (October, 1998 thru July, 1999). Monitoring file review back to 1989 when 10 year lease was issued.

Participants

Names

Position

Tanya Egan
Remijio Chavez
Jessica Walker
Marvin Urban

Natural Resource Specialist
Rangeland Management Specialist
Botanist
Range Assessment Tech.

Section 1-Identification of Area(s) and Related Information

1. **Site** (Specific Geographic Area) within Management Unit (allotment, pasture or area) -
Allotment name/number: Ord Mountain/08005

Allotment Description - The Ord Mountain Allotment is located approximately 8 mile SE of Barstow. The allotment is bordered on the north by the Rodman and Newberry Mountain ranges, and bordered on the south by the Johnson Valley OHV Open Area. The allotment is bordered on the east by the Marine Corps Air Combat Center at 29 Palms, and on the west by Stoddard Valley. The allotment consists of arid rangelands ranging in elevation from 2,600 to 6,300 feet. Topography is variable and vegetation is diverse. Steep hills and ridges are surrounded by alluvial fans and crosscut by sandy washes. A total of 23 assessments transects were conducted from OM#1A thru OM#13A.

Legal location, UTM, Lat. and Long. - UTM's will be supplied for each transect site when available. See Maps 1 through ? for transect location.

Approximate size in acres (or linear length if lotic riparian) - 112,092 acres of public land, 36,748 acres of private land, of which 22,307 acres are controlled by the livestock producer, and 3,840 acres of State land.

2. **Management Unit** (allotment or pasture-list name/no./acres) -


There are roughly three grazing units in the Ord Mountain Allotment. Ord Mountain and surrounding mountains are typically utilize in the summer months and comprise approximately 30 percent of the allotment. The east side of the allotment is used during the wetter times of the year due to the lack of water sources and this area comprises approximately 40 percent of the allotment. The western side of the allotment is used all year long and is about 30 percent of the allotment.

Indicate the occurrence of public participation (e.g., permittee, interested public, other Federal or State/local agencies), or opportunities for public participation to review achievement of standards and contributing factors (who, when, and conversation or meeting summary): Dave Fisher, lessee and Ileen Anderson from the California Native Plant Society have participated in limited field assessment activities. Mr. Fisher, Ileen Anderson, and Daniel Patterson from the South West Center for Biological Diversity have been keep apprised of progress being made to complete the field assessment process. BLM staff met with Mr. Fisher on August 10, 1999 and discussed areas of concern and possible remedies for progress towards the achievement of standards.

Section 7-Authorized Officer's Determination and Priority for Appropriate Action and Implementation

I have reviewed the recommended determination and supporting rationale regarding the achievement or lack thereof to attain rangeland health standards. In this case, the standard(s) have not been achieved. I have determined the priority for developing and implementing the recommended prescribed action to achieve the standards for the area identified in Section 3. Staff are directed to implement recommendation prescribed action unless modified under "Comments."

This assessment and determination will be reviewed by a team on or before January, 2002 to ascertain the adequacy of current direction to attain standards.



Tim Read
FIELD OFFICE MANAGER

9.22.99
DATE

COMMENTS

Develop a full range of alternative prescriptions which will achieve meeting standards on this allotment.

- delivery system. The placing of salt on public land is currently prohibited when adjacent to undeveloped riparian/wetland habitat. Ramps or floats will be placed in every trough to allow maximum access to water for wildlife. Although the source at Quill Spring has been fenced, this spring development needs to be re-constructed with a design that minimizes resource impacts.

A range of alternatives for all the management actions considered will be included in the EA for this allotment.

Estimated Cost of Action:

Item(s) - Up to \$10,000 paid out over the next 6 years for fencing materials, pipe, troughs etc., for riparian enhancements work at Willow, Kane, Aztec, Fisher, Quill and Badger Springs.

Labor - Most of the riparian related labor would be volunteer labor. WM's for land exchanges must be made available. The seasonal closures recommended would require increase field patrols and monitoring.

Performance Period for Action:

Implement seasonal closure in Ord Mtn. polygon 3 and Ord#4B beginning on March 1, 2000. Construct one hector exclosures in polygon 3 and Ord#4B between March 1 and June 1, 2000. Initiate the land exchange process for polygon 6 prior to the beginning of the 2000 grazing year. Implement riparian enhancement strategies for Willow Spring prior to May, 2000. The implementation of these management actions would only apply if selected in the Decision Record.

Biological/Physical

Level of resource impacts from non-achievement of the standard: X high medium low
Size and area of affected resources: Approximately 10,000 acres in Ord Mtn. polygons 3, 4 & 6

Probability to arrest further degradation: high X medium low unknown

Administrative

Proportion of federal land in the allotment: X high medium low
Pending administrative actions (lease renewal or transfer): X pending not pending until

Social

Anticipated cooperation of the permittee/lessee: X expected not expected
Legal requirements: X compelling not compelling
Other: Expect some level of cooperation from lessee, however lessee may choose to appeal some of the management actions recommended if the Decision Record selects the management actions cited in Section 5.

Economic Considerations

Not a major factor.

Section 6-Documentation of Involvement by Permittees/Lesseees, State Agencies and the Interested Public to Determine Conformance With Standards and to Determine Contributing Factors

Names	Position
Remijio Chavez	Rangeland Mgmt. Spec.
Tanya Egan	Natural Resource Spec.
Jessica Walker	Botanist

In cases where the standards are not achieved and after considering all relevant information, we recommend the priority for developing and implementing appropriate action to achieve standards in Section 2:

Recommended Prescribed Action:

Upland habitat not meeting standards: Ord Mtn. polygons 3, 6 and portions of 4 have been identified as not achieving the Native Species standard and not conforming to national guidelines vi, vii, viii, xi and xii (see 43 CFR 4180.2). Recommendations for polygon 3 include , but is not limited to the following management action - Implement a seasonal closure to livestock from March 15 thru June 15, and September 1 thru October 15. These are critical seasons related to desert tortoise emergence and reproduction. These time frames also allow for rest during the critical growing period for key species and allow for seed dissemination of key forage species to occur. The displaced cattle (30 to 50 head) would be evenly distributed to other areas of use within the allotment. We anticipate only negligible impacts in any of those use areas the displaced cattle have been placed. The displaced cattle could also be relocated to private lands within or outside the allotment.

Construct a minimum of 2 upland, one hector exclosures in concert with the lessee and interested publics within polygon 3. These exclosures would be used to compare both qualitative and quantitative attributes of plant communities in the absence of grazing. Implement this same restriction for Ord Mtn. polygon 4 and construct 1, one hector exclosure.

Recommendation for Ord Mtn. polygon 6 include, but not limited to the following management action - Consider exchanging public lands along Camp Rock Rd. at T. 7N., R. 2E., Sections 14, 15 & 24 and T.7N., R3E., Section 30. This lands maybe more appropriately used as a private holding pasture because of existing holding and watering facilities on intermingled private lands owned by the lessee, and are difficult to properly manage. These sections of public land would be exchanged with private lands owned by the lessee inside or outside the allotment. Private land would be selected based upon which private lands would best achieve the resource objective stated in the Ord Mountain AMP and other related resource objectives.

Conduct rangeland monitoring allotment wide a minimum of four times a year in order to better assess rangeland conditions. The lessee will be receiving a new grazing decision containing any new terms and conditions cited in the Decision Record prior to March 1, 2000.

Riparian habitat not meeting standards: The previously mentioned developed spring sites would be modified to enhance riparian values in the following order of priority: Willow, Kane, Aztec, Fisher, Badger and Quill. These modifications would occur with full cooperation with the lessee who currently holds the water rights to all 6 developed springs. Due to limited funding, these modifications would occur on a scheduled basis, two springs at a time over the next 3 years. These modifications could include fencing, adding additional troughs, re-routing pipeline systems and placing shut-off devices (floats) within the water

Standard Determination on Standard Achievement (check appropriate box for each standard)
Native Species _____ Met/ XX Not Met but Progressing Towards/ _____ Not
Met and Not Progressing Towards/ _____ N/A
Magnitude: Acres Not Met: 10,000 acres Percent of Allotment/Area Not
Met 9%
Are livestock a significant factor? (circle one): X YES _____ NO

Rationale supporting determination: The field assessments conducted in Ord Mtn. polygons 3, 4 & 6 from October through July, 1999 revealed moderate to heavy utilization levels during the critical growing periods and the lack of periodic rest have degraded the vegetative attributes in these plant communities. Monitoring data also reflects moderate to heavy utilization levels in past grazing years. Based on vegetative conditions documented in Ord Mtn. Polygon 3, portions of 4 & 6 the desert tortoise and bighorn sheep habitat quality within these polygons has also been negatively impacted. Lessee has been made aware of staff concerns and is improving his distribution of livestock. Recommendations have been formulated that would result in positive progress towards achieving the native species standard. See recommendations in Section 5.

Section 4-For Those Standards Not Achieved, Summary of Contributing Factor(s) for
Determination and Supporting Rationale X Applicable _____ Not Applicable
Standards not achieved from Section 3: Riparian/Wetland & Native Species

Major Uses Rationale and Information, Referenced (list data reviewed, type and information date):

Utilization records - Utilization data collected in past grazing years and any utilization data collected while conducting range health assessments reflect localized excessive use in Ord Mtn. Polygons 3, 4 & 6.

Actual Use - Actual use records for the Ord Mountain Allotment reveal seasonal and yearly fluctuation in stocking rates. Stocking rates range from a low of 120 head in 1998 to a high of 390 head in 1993.

Field notes/photographs - See rangeland health assessments forms by transect.

Vehicle use - OHV use is contributing to desert tortoise habitat degradation in polygons 8, 9 & 11. However, all applicable standards have been achieved in these polygons. This area is within the northern portion of the Johnson Valley OHV Open Area.

Exotic plant presence - Unacceptable levels of schmius and or red brome have been detected at Ord#1A, 1C, 2A, 3A, 3B, 4B, 5B, 6A, 6B, 7A, 8A, 9A & 10A. These levels of exotics have contributed to the Native Species standard not being achieved in Ord#3B, 4B & 6A.

Abnormal weather events - Very dry late winter/spring in 1996, 1997 and 1999 have resulted in a very poor ephemeral crop and has negatively impacted biomass production and the vigor of perennial plant communities within the allotment.

Section 5-BLM Staff Who Reviewed Available Information and Their Recommendations for Development and Implementation of Appropriate Action to Make Significant Progress Toward

Wildlife forms present (obligate) - As documented in the rangeland health assessment conducted between October, 1998 and July, 1999 habitat for wildlife species was noted. It is surmised that habitat quality is considered fair to good and populations stable based on the rangeland attributes, except for Ord#3B, 4B & 6A.

Special status species - As documented in the rangeland health assessment conducted between October, 1998 and July, 1999 habitat quality for special status species was noted. Special status species include desert tortoise, raptors & bighorn sheep. Habitat quality was determined to be not acceptable at Ord#3B & 6A for desert tortoise and not acceptable for bighorn sheep at Ord #4B.

Comment: Overall this standard has been achieved for this allotment, however this standard is currently not being met at Ord#3B, 4B & 6A.

Section 3-Summary of Determinations and Rationale

Determination on Standards Achievement

Upon completion of this form, an examination of the information listed in Section 2 (above) and recent field visits (see PART II), if applicable, indicate the following with regard to standards achievement for the area identified in Section 1:

Standard	Determination on Standard Achievement (check appropriate box for each standard)
Soil Permeability	<u>XX</u> Met/ <u> </u> Not Met but Progressing Towards/ <u> </u> Not Met and Not Progressing Towards/ <u> </u> N/A

Rationale supporting determination: Field assessments conducted between October, 1998 and July, 1999.

Standard	Determination on Standard Achievement (check appropriate box for each standard)
Riparian/Wetland	<u> </u> Met/ <u>XX</u> Not Met but Progressing Towards/ <u> </u> Not Met and No Progressing Towards/
Magnitude: Acres/Miles Not Met	<u><5 acres</u> Percent of Allotment/Area Not Met <u><1%</u>

Are livestock a significant factor? (circle one): XX YES NO

Rationale supporting determination: The water sources that support the above listed developed springs are not fenced to prevent negative impacts from soil compaction and excessive utilization to the surrounding riparian and upland vegetation. Strategies have been developed to enhance riparian values at each of the springs (see recommendations). Utilization of vegetation by cattle surrounding the spring will be eliminated and the potential for that site will be allowed to flourish. However, potential at some of the site could be very limited, but each site will be monitored until potential or PFC has been attained. Two springs development per year will be constructed over the next 3 years. When additional funding becomes available, every attempt will be made to shorten the 3 years estimate for construction implementation. Riparian enhancement strategies have been implemented at Quill Spring.

Standard	Determination on Standard Achievement (check appropriate box for each standard)
Stream Morphology	<u> </u> Met/ <u> </u> Not Met but Progressing Towards/ <u> </u> Not Met and Not Progressing Towards/ <u>X</u> N/A

Rationale supporting determination: No streams are located on this allotment.

landform.

There are no streams located within this allotment.

D. Information relevant to fallback standard, Native Species:

Healthy, productive and diverse populations of native species exist and are maintained.

Biotic Indicators (reference and date of information source)

Community diversity - Community diversity is based upon the number of species by life form and representation of life form diversity relative to the site potential. Deterioration is indicated when the number of life forms and/or number of species by life form declines relative to site potential. For example, most transect conducted within creosote scrub communities exhibited low diversity. Transect 4B has the site potential for high community diversity, however life forms like galleta (*Hilaria jamesii*) have been subjected to continues grazing pressure with no to limited periodic rest. Recruitment of this species is very limited, and the densities of red brome, filaree and cacti species detract from overall community diversity for this site. Community diversity was rated for each transect site. All 23 transect site were rated as follows: Ord#1A - Low, Ord#1B -High, Ord#1C - Medium, Ord#2A - Medium, Ord#2B -Medium, Ord#3A - Medium, Ord#3B - Low, Ord#4A - Medium, Ord#4B - Medium, Ord#5A - Medium, Ord#5B - Medium, Ord#6A - Low, Ord#6B - Medium, Ord#7A - Medium, Ord#7B - Medium, Ord#7C - Medium, Ord#8A - Low, Ord#9A - Medium, Ord#10A - Medium, Ord# 11A - Medium, Ord#12A -High, Ord#12B - Medium & Ord#13A - Medium .

Community structure (layers) - Overall community structure in most of the plant communities within the allotment were fair to good. However, due to the lack of recruitment and moderate to heavy utilization levels, plant community structure was not appropriate for the site at Ord#3B, 4B & 6A.

Exotic species (invaders) - As documented in the rangeland health assessments conducted between October, 1998 and July, 1999 levels of exotic species was noted. Unacceptable levels of schmius and/or red brome detected at Ord#1A, 1C, 2A, 3A, 3B, 4B, 5B, 6A, 6B, 7A, 8A, 9A & 10A. It is unknown if continuous livestock grazing has contributed to this condition.

Species vigor (production, mortality, decadence, etc.) - As documented in the rangeland health assessment conducted between October, 1998 and July, 1999 the vigor of shrubs and herbaceous species was documented at every assessment site. The unseasonably low precipitation, moderate to heavy utilization levels, and lack of periodic rest has resulted in poor vigor being detected at Ord#3B, 4B & 6A.

Diversity of age classes - As documented in the rangeland health assessment conducted between October, 1998 and July, 1999 the diversity of age classes for shrubs and herbaceous species was noted at each assessment site. Due the lack of recruitment and moderate to heavy utilization levels, diverse age classes were not observed at Ord#3B, 4B & 6A.

Recruitment - As documented in the rangeland health assessment conducted between October, 1998 and July, 1999 the levels of recruitment for shrubs and herbaceous species was noted at each assessment site. Due the lack of recruitment and moderate to heavy utilization levels, minimal to no recruitment was observed at Ord#3B, 4B & 6A.

Plant vigor - Overall plant vigor was fair to good in most plant communities occurring within the allotment. However, due to unseasonably low late winter/spring precipitation, moderate to heavy utilization levels, and lack of periodic rest poor plant vigor was detected at Ord#3B, 4B & 6A.

Recruitment - Overall species recruitment was considered to be at acceptable levels in most plant communities occurring within the allotment. However, the unseasonably low late winter/spring precipitation, moderate to heavy utilization levels, and lack of periodic rest has resulted in minimal recruitment of key species as documented at Ord#3B, 4B & 6A.

Physical

Porosity - Infiltration rates (measured in seconds/inch of water drained) & Penetrometer reading (pounds of pressure/sq.inch) available upon request. No indications of unnatural compaction due to livestock grazing, except at water facilities.

Animal/insect burrowing - As documented in the rangeland health assessments conducted October through July, 1999 in the Ord Mountain Allotment, the presence or absence of small mammal, or desert tortoise burrows are documented. Low densities of small mammal/desert tortoise burrows were detected at Ord#3B & 6A.

Comments: Soils stable. No indicators of accelerated erosion or unnatural compaction caused by livestock grazing.

- B. Information relevant to fallback standard, **Riparian/Wetland:**
Riparian-wetland areas are in properly functioning condition.

Biotic Indicators (reference and date of information source)

PFC - Riparian vegetation is limited to small springs and addits. The larger of these areas is approximately one acre and the smallest spring measures less than a ten feet by ten feet area. The amount of water produced is limited, and could be generally be characterized from a small flow about the diameter of a pencil to a trickle. In May, 1997 the following five springs were evaluated to see if they are meeting properly functioning condition for riparian resources. These comprise less than 5 acres of riparian habitat. Goat Spring was classified as functioning-at-risk. Aztec Spring was classified as non-functioning. Quill Spring was classified as non-functioning, however the source was recently fenced and this spring has been re-classified as functioning-at-risk. The spring development needs re-construction. Kane Spring was classified as functioning-at-risk, with a downward trend. Willow Spring was classified as non-functioning. However, the lessee insists that the source at Willow Spring is protected. This needs to be verified prior to any re-evaluation of PFC for this specific spring site. Fisher Spring has not been evaluated for PFC, but based on available information this spring source is estimated to be functioning-at-risk. Badger Spring has not be classified, but based on available information this source is considered to be non-functioning. Both of these spring sites need to be evaluated to verify estimated conditions.

Comments: Prescriptions are currently being developed to enhance riparian values at these developed spring sites.

- C. Information relevant to fallback standard, **Stream Morphology:**
Stream channel morphology (including but not limited to gradient, width/depth ratio, channel roughness and sinuosity) and functions are appropriate for the climate and

3. **Landscape** (identify by groups of management units, or by watershed if cross-cutting MU's and list) - Twenty three places were assessed for rangeland health. These 23 sites were mapped inside 13 polygons that represent a specific area with similar landscape features, vegetation, and use. Ord #1A, 3A&3B-LATR/HIRI, Ord#1B, 5A, 5B, 6B, 9A, 10A, 11A & 13A- Mix Mojave Scrub, Ord#1C, 2A, 6A, 7A, 8A & 12B- Creosote Scrub, Ord#2B-Desert Wash(Daggett), Ord#4A-Upper Elevational Mix Mojave Scrub, Ord#4B- Upper Elevational Shrubland, Ord#7B & 7C-Desert Wash(Kane), Ord#12A-Desert Wash(Box Cyn.)/Mixed Mojave Scrub. See EA for description of community types.
4. ☐ **Period of Use** - This is a yearlong grazing allotment. The western portion of the allotment is grazed yearlong due to high accessibility to developed water. Higher elevational rangelands are grazed generally in the summer, while the eastern portion of the allotment is grazed in the winter months due to the lack of developed water.
5. ☐ **Kind and Class of Livestock:** - Cattle/Cow-Calf
6. ☐ **Other Stratification** (identify-e.g., all riparian areas in XXX Pasture) -The allotment was stratified into 13 upland polygons based on topography, know areas of livestock concentration and accessibility. Most developed water sources were evaluated for PFC. Portions of the Newberry and Rodman Wilderness areas overlap the northern boundary of the allotment. Known populations of Mojave monkeyflower (*Mimulus mohavensis*), a BLM sensitive species is located within the allotment boundary off Camp Rock Road, and Jojoba (*Simmondsia chinensis*), an Unusual Plant Assemblage (UPA) also located off Camp Rock Road.

Section 2-Identification of Information Reviewed

The following information (e.g. monitoring, literature, personal communication, field observations, etc.) was considered to determine attainment and, if applicable, contributing factor(s) for non-achievement and failure to make significant progress towards achievement of standards listed later in this section.

A. **Information relevant to fallback standard. Soil Permeability:**

Upland soils exhibit infiltration and permeability rates that are appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform.

Soil Stability Indicators

Soil Stability evaluated using SSF Form (7310-12) - Ord#12B showed signs of slight erosion but the causes are considered natural, all other assessments sites, with the exception of active washes are considered stable.

Productivity Indicators

Biological

Litter and organic matter - As documented in the rangeland health assessments conducted October through July, 1999 in the Ord Mountain Allotment; percentages of persistent and non-persistent litter is appropriate for each site and contributes to the protection of the soil from accelerated erosion.

Cryptogam/microphyte - As documented in the rangeland health assessments conducted October, 1998 through July, 1999 in the Ord Mountain Allotment; the presence of cryptogams were documented at Ord#1B, 12B & 13B. These cryptogams were abundant and intact.